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CONSUMER TIME R-43

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Produced by Consumers' Counsel Division of the Department of Agriculture, and presented in cooperation with United States Government agencies working for consumers.

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1. ANNOUNCER: This is CONSUMER TIME.

2. SOUND: CASH REGISTER - CLOSE DRAWER.

3. NANCY: That's your money buying food.

4. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.

5. JOHN: That's your money paying for a home.

6. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.

7. NANCY: That's your money buying clothes . . .

8. JOHN: Buying you a living in wartime.

9. SOUND: CASH REGISTER - CLOSE DRAWER.

10. NANCY: Are you helping to win the war . . . spending your money wisely . . . wasting nothing . . . saving every penny you can?

11. ANNOUNCER: Each week at this hour CONSUMER TIME brings us the facts that will help us make our pennies and dollars work for war . . . and buy the strength and health and courage we need for victory.

This program is produced by the Consumers' Counsel in the Department of Agriculture, and is presented in cooperation with United States Government agencies working for consumers.

And now here's your Consumers' Counsel in person - Donald Montgomery.

12. MONTGOMERY: And right here beside me at the microphone is your own consumer representative - that smart young housewife who gets the facts for you - Mrs. Evelyn Freyman.

13. FREYMAN: And - if I remember rightly, Mr. Montgomery - you promised to have some facts on textiles ready for us today.

14. MONTGOMERY: I did - and we have. "We" meaning my two reporters here - Nancy Ordway and Johnny Flynn.

15. NANCY: All set, Mrs. Freyman.

16. JOHN: So am I.

17. FREYMAN: Well, what I want to know is - what's happening to textiles? What effect is the war going to have on the clothes we buy - and our sheets and towels and rugs?

18. MONTGOMERY: Well, as far as clothes are concerned - you can just look at John and Nancy here. They're both wearing the new wartime outfits - made acccording to Government specifications.

19. FREYMAN: They are? But these clothes look just the same as what we have been wearing.

20. NANCY: That's just the point. The Government says styles are to stay where they are. Any clothes we have on hand right now will stay in style as long as the war lasts.

21. FREYMAN: Well, that's a blessing!

22. NANCY: But any that are made after this must meet certain specifications.

23. FREYMAN: What sort of specifications?

24. NANCY: Notice my dress? No patch pockets - no wide pleated skirt - no big balloon sleeves ---

25. FREYMAN: But it's awfully good looking.

26. NANCY: "Smart simplicity" I guess the fashion magazine would call it. Our new styles will simply cut out the fol-de-rols that waste material and often clutter up good design.

27. FREYMAN: And what about our other clothes --- besides dresses?

28. NANCY: Notice my hat?

29. FREYMAN: Very becoming. Made out of the same material as your dress -- isn't it?

30. NANCY: And - notice my stockings?

31. FREYMAN: Are those nylon?

32. NANCY: No, the Government needs nylon - for making parachutes. These stockings are rayon.

33. FREYMAN: But they don't look like it!

34. NANCY: Oh, the rayon stockings of tomorrow are going to look a lot better than when they first came out - ten or fifteen years ago. They'll wear and fit better too.

35. MONTGOMERY: But that doesn't mean you won't have to watch out for quality, Mrs. Freyman. There's more in these new fabrics than meets the eye, and sometimes less than meets the eye.

36. FREYMAN: How do you mean, Mr. Montgomery?

37. MONTGOMERY: Well, take this suit Johnny's got on. What kind of material would you say it is?

38. FREYMAN: Why - wool.

39. JOHN: Want to feel the sleeve?

40. FREYMAN: Feels like wool too.

41. JOHN: But it's part rayon.

42. FREYMAN: It is!

43. JOHN: That's why you ought to look at the labels when you're buying clothes or fabrics. More and more now, you'll find that they contain a combination of different kinds of yarns.

44. FREYMAN: Does that mean they won't wear so well?

45. JOHN: Not necessarily. This suit, for instance, ought to give pretty good service - because it's made of good yarn and firmly woven. But you want to watch for that.

46. FREYMAN: You mean - by holding the fabric up to the light?

47. JOHN: That's one way. At least - don't buy anything just because it <u>looks</u> good. Especially men's and boys' suits. You <u>have</u> to buy carefully when you're getting just one pair of trousers.

48. FREYMAN: You mean - no more two-trouser suits?

49. JOHN: That's one of the wartime specifications.

50. FREYMAN: I see. But they aren't changing the <u>appearance</u> of men's suits ---

51. JOHN: Don't you miss the cuffs off my trousers?

52. FREYMAN: Oh, yes - now that you mention it.

53. JOHN: No extra-wide legs. No bell bottoms - and no waistbands that come up to our armpits - and no vests with double doublebreasted suits ---

54. FREYMAN: But what's the reason for all this?

55. JOHN: Save material.

56. FREYMAN: You mean - wool's so scarce?

57. JOHN: You bet it's scarce.

58. FREYMAN: But why? [illegible] We <u>produce</u> wool in this country.

59. JOHN: Right - we produce about four hundred and fifty million pounds a year.

60. FREYMAN: Well, then ---

61. JOHN: But we use twice that much - in peacetime.

62. FREYMAN: Where do we get it?

63. JOHN: From Australia - Africa - New Zealand ---

64. FREYMAN: And we can't get any more from there?

65. JOHN: Right. Of course, we get some from South America, but not enough for all our needs ---

66. FREYMAN: Wait. You were talking about the wool we need in peacetime. How much will we need during this war?

67. JOHN: Well, that's a thing nobody can estimate. But maybe this will give you some idea. The average American - in peacetime - uses two and a half pounds of wool per year. A soldier uses a hundred pounds.

68. FREYMAN: A hundred pounds!

69. JOHN: That's when he's not fighting. If you could talk to one just in from maneuvers, he'd have a different story to tell ---

70. SOLDIER: Look at me. Sort of a mess, huh? Oh, you needn't draw back, lady. I'm perfectly harmless. Just a little torn an' dirty - that's all. An' I may not smell like a rose. But I'd like to see you after you'd ploughed through mud an' crawled along on your belly (pardon me - stomach) for four days. This war business is no pink tea party, you know. No wonder that after a four-day battle half the soldiers have got to be outfitted all over again. An' after a six-day battle - why, the hull doggone bunch has got to be outfitted - every last stitch o' clothes, from the skin out, an' even that sometimes is purty near wore through. Does that give you some idea o' what fightin' does to clothes?

71. FREYMAN: It certainly does - and some idea of why we civilians should be darn glad to get along on any wool we can. Just suppose our boys couldn't get the uniforms they need. What then?

72. JOHN: I'll tell you what, Mrs. Freyman. According to the Chief of the WPB Textiles Branch ---

73. VOICE: "I am sure that poor clothing and zero weather are our allies in Russia today. Our first job is to clothe the armed forces of America - and do that well."

74. FREYMAN: But of course our soldiers aren't fighting in such cold zones - at least, not yet.

75. JOHN: Some of them may be.

76. FREYMAN: But I thought - the only actual fighting they're doing right now is down in Burma - and Australia ---

77. JOHN: But six miles from there the temperature runs below zero.

78. FREYMAN: Below zero! Six miles away?

79. JOHN: Six miles straight up - in the stratosphere. If you were up there right now in a Flying Frotress - with a couple of our boys ---

80. SOUND: INSIDE PERSPECTIVE OF AIRPLANE MOTOR.

81. PILOT: Red --- (FEAR IN HIS VOICE) Hey - Red!

82. RED: (DAZED) Huh?

83. PILOT: Don't fall asleep!

84. RED: (ROUSING) Gee, I - I don't know what's the matter with me.

85. PILOT: Probably the cold up here.

86. RED: Yeah. My face is so cold -- bet if Joe Louis punched me, I couldn't even feel it.

87. PILOT: Better move around a bit - and rub your cheeks. Frostbite's no fun.

88. RED: Move around! In this Santa Claus suit?

89. PILOT: You'll be mighty glad you've got that Santa Claus suit - if we should have to bail out.

90. RED: Boy! At thirty-one thousand feet! What if the parachute didn't open?

91. PILOT: Well, you know what the quartermaster says - bring it back, and he'll give you a new one.

92. RED: (LAUGHS. THEN, AFTER PAUSE) Gee - how cold do you suppose it is out there?

93. PILOT: There's a thermometer outside.

94. RED: Can't see a thing. Window's all frosted over.

95. PILOT: Better open it.

96. RED: Open it! And let the cold air in?

97. PILOT: All the windows will get frosted over if you don't.

98. RED: Gee-minny Christmas! And I do mean Christmas.

99. PILOT: Can you see the thermometer?

100. RED: Forty-six below! And they call this the tropics!

(PAUSE)

101. JOHN: (ON CUE) So you see, Mrs. Freyman ---

102. FREYMAN: I certainly do. And that little joke of theirs - about the parachutes - makes me realize that the quality of the materials for our armed forces must be the very best too.

103. JOHN: Right. A human life may depend upon those parachutes. That's why the rest of us are going without silk and nylon.

104. FREYMAN: Well, what about other kinds of textiles, Johnny - like rayon? Do our armed forces need that, too?

105. JOHN: Yes, they need some rayon - for parachute shrouds, and for cord in tires on Army trucks. And they'll be wearing rayon neckties - and rayon kerchiefs for sailors - instead of the silk we used to get from Japan.

106. FREYMAN: Rayon's doubling for a lot of things these day, isn't it? Silk - and nylon ---

107. JOHN: And part of the wool in civilian clothes.

108. FREYMAN: Well, does that mean there won't be enough left for rayon dresses? Not that I wouldn't be willing to give them up, if it would help win the war ---

109. JOHN: Well, I don't think you need worry about that, Mrs. Freyman. Rayon manufacturers are stepping up their production. As you've already heard, most of the women's stockings are going to be made of rayon - or rayon and cotton mixed.

110. FREYMAN: But what about cotton stockings? I heard that ---

111. JOHN: Well, Nancy knows more about the cotton situation than I do. Better ask her.

112. FREYMAN: How about that, Nancy? I thought you said - 'way last fall - that the Bureau of Home Economics was designing patterns for cotton hose.

113. NANCY: I did. They've made about a hundred and fifty different designs. Everything from sheer cobweb meshes for evening - to plain lisle in service weights.

114. FREYMAN: Then - why aren't we going to use them?

115. NANCY: Well, you see, fine lisle hose - such as we used to import from England - needs to be made from long-staple yarns. That is - cotton with long fibers.

116. FREYMAN: And we can't grow that kind of cotton in this country?

117. NANCY: Yes, we have long-staple cotton, but we need it for war use, too. Besides, we have only limited equipment for spinning it into yarn. And I should say, we had the cotton.

118. FREYMAN: What do you mean? I thought there was a huge cotton surplus.

119. NANCY: There was and still is a surplus of short-staple cotton. But we need more of the long and medium staple kind. And the Government's asking farmers to grow more of that kind, because our imports are cut off.

120. FREYMAN: Does that mean that our armed forces are using it all up?

121. NANCY: They're using a good deal of it. And this year America will need twice as much cotton as she usually does.

122. FREYMAN: Goodness! That's quite a difference.

123. NANCY: Well, when you consider that an ordinary civilian - like you and me - uses about twenty-five pounds of cotton a year ---

124. FREYMAN: I do? Twenty-five pounds? That sounds like a lot.

125. NANCY: But every soldier uses three times that much.

126. FREYMAN: Seventy-five pounds of cotton per year for every soldier? What on earth does he do with it?

127. NANCY: Well, we have some figures here. For instance - he needs twelve and a half pairs of trousers. Some cotton, some wool.

128. FREYMAN: Twelve and a half!

129. JOHN: And eight pairs of socks.

130. NANCY: And twelve and a half shirts.

131. JOHN: And four pairs of shorts.

132. NANCY: Of course, these are the figures for soldiers in actual combat, where their clothes get hard wear.

133. JOHN: And another thing you want to consider - the Army likes to have one uniform ready in storage, and another one being made - for every uniform actually on a soldier's back. You see, we pride ourselves in this country on keeping our soldiers well clothed. The American soldier is said to be the world's best-dressed man.

134. FREYMAN: And I say - let's keep him that way.

135. NANCY: It may mean a little sacrifice on your part, Mrs. Freyman.

136. FREYMAN: Oh, I guess I can get along without a few cotton dresses.

137. NANCY: That shouldn't be necessary - not if you really need them.

138. But with money and materials so precious - you're helping hitler when you buy things you don't really need.

138. MONTGOMERY: And I'd like to add another point right there, if I may

139. FREYMAN: What's that, Mr. Montgomery?

140. MONTGOMERY: What you do buy clothes or fabrics - try to get the very best quality you can for the money you have to spend. Cheap materials, which wear out before they should, aren't only a waste of money - which America needs for guns and planes and tanks. They're a waste of machines, too - and the labor that went into making the fabrics - and the trains and trucks that brought them to market. They're even a waste of the land that grew the fiber.

141. FREYMAN: But Mr. Montgomery - I should think that would be the responsibility of the manufacturer - seeing that the materials he turns out are good quality.

142. MONTGOMERY: It is - partly. The Government wants him to watch the quality of the goods he produces at this time. But it's your job as a consumer to do your part well too. If you demand more goods than he can honestly produce with the materials he has at hand - why, then he'll feel prompted to stretch those materials as far as he can - and turn out shoddy goods.

143. FREYMAN: Then - I ought to take care of the things I already have - make them last as long as possible - buy only what I absolutely need. But - when I do buy new things - get the very best quality I can afford.

144. MONTGOMERY: Right. But mind you - that doesn't necessarily mean the most expensive thing you can afford. It means comparing quality as well as price. It means studying fabrics - the different kinds of weaves and fibers, so you'll know which gives the best service. And it means reading labels - and asking clerks whether a certain dress will shrink when it's washed - and whether a towel is colorfast - and the exact thread count of a sheet you're buying. All those things are doubly important now - with new fabrics subbing for old - and prices changing so rapidly.

145. FREYMAN: You mean - we should be sure that the quality is worth the price.

146. MONTGOMERY: Exactly. And guard against hidden price rises.

147. FREYMAN: What do you mean by "hidden" price rises, Mr. Montgomery?

148. MONTGOMERY: I mean the ones you can't see on the price tag. Suppose you were in the habit of buying a certain type of sheet that cost one-fifty, and the next time you went into the store you found that particular sheet had been marked up to one seventy-five. You'd see that price rise.

(MORE)

But suppose instead the store should be selling a cheaper sheet as the one-fifty grade. A sheet with fewer threads - wider spaced, with a starch sizing filling in the spaces. Unless you studied the thread count - and rubbed the fabric, to see if there was any sizing - you might buy that sheet and not realize the hidden price increase - till you'd got it home, and washed it, and found you'd bought a piece of sleazy fabric.

149. FREYMAN: I see. Then I've got to be on guard - same as the armed forces.

150. MONTGOMERY: That's your duty as a wartime consumer - on guard against the enemy known as high cost of living. Buy carefully - take good care of the things you have - waste nothing.

151. FREYMAN: Have you any more orders that I ought to carry out?

152. MONTGOMERY: Well, at least a few that concern you - some of this week's orders from Government agencies. I've asked Nancy Ordway to round them up. Nancy ---

153. NANCY: And here they are - hot from Washington ---

(NEWS)

154. MONTGOMERY: Thank you, Nancy. And next week, Mrs. Freyman, we'll be back with more news for you consumers.

155. FREYMAN: When are you going to tell us all about food preservation centers? Remember - you promised - when you talked about gardens ---

156. MONTGOMERY: All right - we'll plan on food preservation for next week's CONSUMER TIME. And meanwhile - how would you like a Consumer Tips card about textiles - telling you what to guard against - and what to watch for - and the changes that wartime is making in fabrics?

157. FREYMAN: You've condensed all that information on a single Tips card?

158. MONTGOMERY: We have - and it's just the handy three-by-five inch card that fits right into your reference file - or into your purse when you go shopping.

159. FREYMAN: Well, I'll have to get one of those.

160. MONTGOMERY: Then just write to me - at the Department of Agriculture in Washington, and the card will be sent to you.

161. FREYMAN: Fine, Mr. Montgomery. I'll do that.

162. MONTGOMERY: And till next week then - be smart about your buying.

163. ANNOUNCER: Did you all get that address? For your copy of the Consumer Tips on textiles - write to your Consumers' Counsel - Department of Agriculture - Washington, D. C. Please be sure to tell us your own name and address,and the call letters of the station over which you heard this program.

Next week CONSUMER TIME will bring you more valuable facts from your Consumers' Counsel in the Department of Agricultur presented in cooperation with Government agencies working for consumers.

Among the cast of today's program were:

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